

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 03064 01 OF 02 161916Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 /057 W
-----049458 162031Z /53

R 161728Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 667
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 3064

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: IT, US
SUBJ: VIEWS OF PCI OFFICIAL

SUMMARY. DURING A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, A SENIOR ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) OFFICIAL NOTED HIS PARTY'S CONCERN OVER THE PROLONGED DURATION OF ITALY'S CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS. HE CONCEDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SOME DEBATE WITHIN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP OVER THE MANNER IN WHICH TO HANDLE FALLBACK POSITIONS IN PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER'S RECENT SPEECH TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC), ALTHOUGH HE STRESSED THAT THERE WAS UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PUSHING FOR A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY. THE PCI OFFICIAL EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE PARTY WOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF ITS BASE OF IT AGREED TO A POLITICAL SOLUTION WHICH PROVIDED FOR A SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD IN ASSERTING THE PCI'S POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL. THE COMMUNIST OFFICIAL INTENDS TO MAKE A TWO-WEEK VISIT TO THE UNITED
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PAGE 02 ROME 03064 01 OF 02 161916Z

STATES IN EARLY APRIL. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING A BRIEF CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 14, ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARIAT MEMBER GIORGIO NAPOLITANO EXPRESSED A MEASURE OF CONCERN OVER THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONTINUING ITALIAN POLITICAL CRISIS. ACCORDING TO NAPOLITANO, THE PCI DELEGATION HAD CONCLUDED FROM ITS

MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER DESIGNATE ANDREOTTI LAST WEEK THAT AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL CRISIS WAS IMMINENT. HOWEVER, SUBSEQUENT EVENTS HAVE PROVED THIS TO BE AN INCORRECT ASSESSMENT.

2. NAPOLITANO DESCRIBED THE PCI'S PERPLEXITY OVER THE DIFFICULTY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) SEEM TO BE HAVING IN FINDING AN ADJECTIVE TO DEFINE THE TYPE OF PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY WHICH IS LIKELY TO RESULT FROM THE PRESENT CRISIS. FROM THE CPI STANDPOINT, NAPOLITANO SAID THERE IS AN AWARENESS THAT THE FORMATION OF A MAJORITY INCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS WOULD NOT REPRESENT THE CREATION OF A POLITICAL ALLIANCE; HOWEVER, IT WOULD REPRESENT THE BREAKING DOWN OF YET ONE MORE DISCRIMINATORY BARRIER DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE PCI FROM PLAYING ITS RIGHTFUL ROLE IN THE ITALIAN POLITICAL PROCESS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL BERLINGUER'S SPEECH TO THE RECENT PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION, NAPOLITANO INDICATED THAT THE PARTY LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN UNANIMOUS IN AGREEING THAT ITS DOMINANT THEME SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON THE PARTY'S OBJECTIVE OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE QUESTION OF REFERRING TO A POSSIBLE FALLBACK POSITION, I.E. A CONTRACTED, RECOGNIZED, AND EXPLICIT MAJORITY, AS WELL AS TO THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE CREATION

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ROME 03064 01 OF 02 161916Z

OF A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT DC PARTICIPATION, HAD STIMULATED CONSIDERABLE DEBATE WITH THE LEADERSHIP. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE DEBATE WAS SHARPER ON THE SECOND QUESTION, ALTHOUGH HE INDICATED THAT THE POSITIONS AS EVENTAULLY SET FORTH IN THE BERLINGUER SPEECH REPRESENTED AN ACCURATE CONSENSUS OF THE LEADERSHIP'S VIEWS.

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PAGE 01 ROME 03064 02 OF 02 161905Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 3064

4. NAPOLITANO DID NOT EXPECT THAT THE PCI'S SUBSEQUENT RETREAT TO ITS FALLBACK POSITION, I.E. PARTICIPATION IN A RECOGNIZED MAJORITY, WOULD CREATE EXCESSIVE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE LEADERSHIP WITH THE PARTY'S BASE. NAPOLITANO NOTED IT IS ALWAYS IMPORTANT POLITICALLY TO MAKE A STAB FOR MORE THAN YOU MIGHT POSSIBLY BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE. IN THIS REGARD HE FELT THAT THE SOCIALISTS HAD MADE A SERIOUS POLITICAL MISTAKE IN CONCEDING TO THE DC TOO EARLY THE FACT THAT THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY HAD BECOME IMPOSSIBLE AT THIS JUNCTURE. HE ADDED THAT WHILE THE IDEA OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY WAS A CLEAR GOAL WHICH THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S BASE EASILY UNDERSTOOD, THE PCI LEADERSHIP, GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE PARTY, HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING ABLE TO LEAD THE BASE RATHER THAN HAVING THE BASE LEAD THE LEADERSHIP AS WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. IN ANY EVENT, NAPOLITANO FELT THAT IF THE PCI COULD ACHIEVE AN ACCORD WITH THE OTHER PARTIES IN WHICH IT DEMONSTRATED NOT ONLY ITS INCREASED POLITICAL ROLE, I.E. PARTICIPATION IN A POLITICAL MAJORITY, BUT ALSO ITS ABILITY TO INFLUENCE

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PAGE 02 ROME 03064 02 OF 02 161905Z

THE NAMING OF MINISTERS, THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE SHAPE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM, DISCONTENT AMONG THE BASE COULD EASILY BE CONTAINED.

5. NAPOLITANO EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN OVER THE THREAT TO THE PCI FROM ITS LEFT AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOCIALISTS, FOLLOWING THEIR NATIONAL CONGRESS, MIGHT MAKE A MOVE TOWARDS RETURNING TO SOME FORM OF CENTER-LEFT COALITION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. ON THE THREAT FROM THE LEFT, NAPOLITANO SAID HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM BOLOGNA WHERE HE HAD BEEN HECKLED BY EXPONENTS OF THE EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY LEFT AND WHERE ACTS DIRECTED AGAINST THE PCI FROM THE SAME DIRECTION CONTINUE TO TAKE PLACE ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NOT ALL PUBLICIZED. MOST DISTRESSING, HE ADDED, IS THE ROLE OF THE EXTREME LEFT IN THE LABOR AREA

SINCE THE EQUALITY OF THE THREE LABOR MOVEMENTS WITHIN THE NATIONAL FEDERATION PROVIDES EXCESSIVE WEIGHT TO THESE ELEMENTS WHO HAVE INFILTRATED THE CISL AND UIL. DISCUSSING THE SOCIALISTS, NAPOLITANO FORESAW THE ONLY POLITICAL INITIATIVE WHICH THEY MIGHT TAKE BEFORE THE YEAR, ALBEIT AN UNLIKELY EVENT, TO BE A STEP TO RETURN TO A CENTER-LEFT TYPE COALITION IN WHICH THE PCI WOULD BE A PART OF THE MAJORITY ALTHOUGH ITS VOTES WOULD NO LONGER BE DETERMINING. FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, NAPOLITANO DID NOT LOOK UPON THIS POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT WITH ANY ENTHUSIASM.

6. EMBOFF TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE ENCOUNTER TO POINT OUT TO NAPOLITANO A NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE COMMUNIST CONTROLLED PRESS WHICH EITHER DEFORM AMERICAN POLICY OR UNFAIRLY ATTACK AMERICAN PUBLIC FIGURES, I.E. AMBASSADOR GARDNER, GENERAL MCALISTER. EMBOFF ADDED THAT THIS TREATMENT HARDLY ACCORDS WITH PCI PROFESSED POLICY OF SEEKING TO BE NEITHER ANTI-AMERICAN NOR ANTI-SOVIET, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 03064 02 OF 02 161905Z

AND HE STRESSED THAT THEY COULD ONLY ADD TO THE DOUBTS WHICH EXIST WITHIN THE USG CIRCLES ABOUT THE TRUE NATURE OF THE PCI. NAPOLITANO RESPONDED THAT THE PCI GETS THE SAME TYPE OF COMPLAINTS EVERY TIME IT SENDS A DELEGATION TO MOSCOW, BUT, AFTER SCANNING THE ARTICLES, CONCEDED THAT THERE MIGHT BE VALID REASONS FOR THE POINTS EMBOFF HAD RAISED.

7. DURING THE MEETING, NAPOLITANO ADVISED EMBOFF THAT THE INTENDS TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES FOR 15 DAYS BEGINNING APRIL ON THE BASIS OF INVITATIONS FROM PRINCETON, HARVARD AND YALE UNIVERSITIES. NAPOLITANO ALSO PLANS TO VISIT NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON. EMBOFF TOLD NAPOLITANO THAT PROSPECTS FOR HIM TO MEET OFFICIALLY WITH ANY USG OFFICIALS WERE NON-EXISTENT IN THE CONTEXT OF PRESENT AMERICAN POLICY AS SET FORTH IN THE SEPARTMENT OF STATE'S JANUARY 12 STATEMENT. NAPOLITANO REPLIED THAT THIS CONFORMED WITH THE ASSESSMENT WHICH L'UNITA'S WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT JACOVIELLO HAD RECENTLY PROVIDED HIM HERE IN ROME. IN CONCLUDING THE DISCUSSION, NAPOLITANO DREW EMBOFF'S ATTENTION TO THE MODERATE RESPONSE THE PCI HAD MADE TO THE DEPARTMENT'S JANUARY 12 STATEMENT WHICH CONTRASTED, HE SAID, SHARPLY FROM POSTIONS TAKEN BY QUOTE SOME OF YOUR WESTERN EUROPEAN FRIENDS. END QUOTE. GARDNER

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Message Attributes

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